

A LAST WILL AND TESTAMENT

A LUCKY chance, in the course of last summer, put me in possession of what seems to be an unpublished document, of interest not only in itself but also because of its historical and personal associations. It is a very human composition, intensely characteristic both of its author and of his age, and showing what things were most present to his mind when, after a long and troubled life, he came to prepare for death. He had played a considerable part in the ecclesiastical quarrels of his country in the days when Scotland, after settling her own Reformation, took up the challenge of James the Sixth, and strove to convince him and others that Presbytery was more to the mind of the Scottish nation than Episcopacy. In the long war of Kirk and Crown the people of Scotland were generally on the side of the Kirk; and though the struggle was in point of form mainly about methods of church government and church order, yet the principles involved called forth the devotion of a succession of Scotsmen who, each in his own way, contributed to the extinction of the doctrine of the "Divine Right of Kings" some three centuries before it disappeared the other day in Germany. Of these men one was the Reverend Andrew Duncan, Minister of Crail, whose life runs almost parallel with that of King James himself. He incurred the King's displeasure for the part he had taken, along with other contumacious ministers, in the unlawful Assembly at Aberdeen in 1605, and in punishment for his rebel words and deeds he was more than once imprisoned, like so many others of his kind, and banished "furth of the realm." But all that failed to shake the serene confidence with which he expressed himself when he came to die; and so Andrew Duncan's "Last Will and Testament" may now be read as a fitting epilogue to the stirring drama of his troubled life.